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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000898

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SUBJECT: MFA USEC ON IRAQ, IRAN, PEACE PROCESS AND SECURITY

Classified By: Ambassador Deborah K. Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

IRAQ: KUWAIT SEES SOME POSITIVE SIGNS

¶1. (C) MFA Undersecretary Khalid Al-Jarallah told the Ambassador September 7 that Kuwait had heard via UN sources that Iraq is now willing to cooperate on the issue of maintenance of land border markers. Jarallah added that Kuwait would shortly welcome an Iraqi delegation here to work on the issue of Iraqi missing from the 1990 war. The Ambassador noted the Iraqi invitation to host the next Tripartite Commission meeting in Baghdad in November; Jarallah said Kuwait welcomed this, but was unsure of the Saudi position. The Ambassador suggested that Kuwait might reach out to the Saudis in support of the proposal, and Jarallah undertook to do so. Turning to the Amir's visit to Washington in August, Jarallah said Kuwait welcomed the opportunity to clarify issues raised in meetings there, and in particular the chance to explain the exact maritime procedures for access to Umm Qasr; he emphasized that the GoK is prepared to be very flexible regarding any Iraqi requirements to facilitate maritime transit. The Ambassador encouraged maximum flexibility, noting Kuwait's long-term security interests were best served by having good relations with its large neighbor.

¶2. (C) The MFA Undersecretary noted that PM Shaykh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al Sabah would depart September 15 for New York, and would stay there for 9-10 days in order to head Kuwait's UNGA delegation. Shaykh Nasser would attend the Clinton Initiative meetings September 22-23 and would then continue on to Latin America, where he will also visit Cuba. Ambassador questioned the purpose of the PM's trip to Havana; Jarallah sidestepped a direct response. (Comment: The PM has something of a penchant for foreign travel. His fondness for antique automobiles and his delegation's attraction to Cuban cigars cannot entirely be ruled out as the principal motivations for the stop. End Comment.) Jarallah asked about the gameplan in the Council for acknowledging the UNSYG's latest report on Iraq sanctions, saying Kuwait's pulsing of missions in New York and in capitals indicated that there would not be a resolution of other formal review of the report. The Ambassador indicated that there might be a need for some acknowledgement, but likely a low-key one the exact form of which had not yet been decided.

IRAN

¶3. (C) Jarallah raised Iranian President Ahmedinejad's latest public offer of a direct, open dialogue with the United States and asked the USG view on this opening.

Kuwait, he observed, interpreted Ahmedinejad,s move as a sign of weakness) an offer being made not out of any genuine interest or commitment to dialogue, but rather in an effort to mollify fractious domestic political opposition. The Ambassador noted that with controversy swirling at the IAEA regarding Iran,s nuclear intentions and the issue of &military dimensions8 being raised by IAEA DG ElBaradei directly, Tehran may be seeking to change the subject) at least in the media. How credible Ahmedinejad,s offer is remains to be determined, but at the same time it should not be rejected out of hand.

PEACE PROCESS: SYRIA AND SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS

¶4. (C) The Ambassador mentioned Kuwait,s recent efforts to engage Syria to be more forthcoming, saying the USG appreciated Kuwait,s role. Jarallah indicated that senior policy advisor Abolhassan had twice visited Damascus and had achieved good progress. Both the US and Kuwait shared the goal of weaning Syria away from Iran and back into the Arab fold, Jarallah commented, although Jarallah regretted that progress on the trilateral border track between the US, Iraq and Syria appeared now to have stalled as a result of Iraqi reaction to the Baghdad bombings. Turkey had also tried to mediate between Damascus and Baghdad, the MFA Usec continued, but also apparently without substantial results.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador emphasized the USG,s commitment to pressing forward on Middle East peace. Seeking a more positive, cooperative role in Damascus is important, but so too is supporting the Palestinian Authority. Jarallah

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responded that Kuwait &fully trusts8 the intentions of the administration to push forward for peace on all fronts, but noted that for Kuwait to take steps now towards normalization with Israel is ↑ easy.8 Rather than making gestures towards Israel, perhaps Kuwait could contemplate taking more steps to support the Palestinians, including with PM Salam Fayyad, whom Jarallah said Kuwait also trusts. The Ambassador replied that the roadmap to statehood laid out by Fayyad includes numerous infrastructure projects which Kuwait could pursue if direct funding of salaries) a key Palestinian ask) remained unpalatable. Beyond that, the Ambassador stressed that Kuwait should overcome its troubled history with the Palestinians by recognizing that a new leaf has been turned) permitting a PA office to open in Kuwait (to replace the existing PLO Administrative Office) would help send the right signal. Jarallah agreed to pursue this up his chain.

SECURITY AND GTMO

¶6. (S) The Ambassador thanked Jarallah for GOK efforts to disrupt Kuwaiti terrorists planning attacks on the US military at Camp Arifjan, KSS Headquarters, and the Amiri Palace. We need this sort of effort and even greater cooperation and coordination is called for. Jarallah heartily agreed, noting &we have to cooperate even more because no we are clearly being threatened too.8 (Comment: Kuwaiti senior-level affirmation of a desire for greater CT cooperation is now fairly consistent across the bureaucracy -- a positive sign) and we will continue to push for this to be effectively translated into action. End Comment.) On GTMO, the Ambassador reviewed the successful September 3 visit of a Kuwaiti team, and Jarallah said he had received a very positive report on the trip from Kuwait,s Ambassador in Washington. Next steps, the Ambassador indicated, would be for a US team to visit to review individual rehab programs and to discuss post-rehab security arrangements.

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